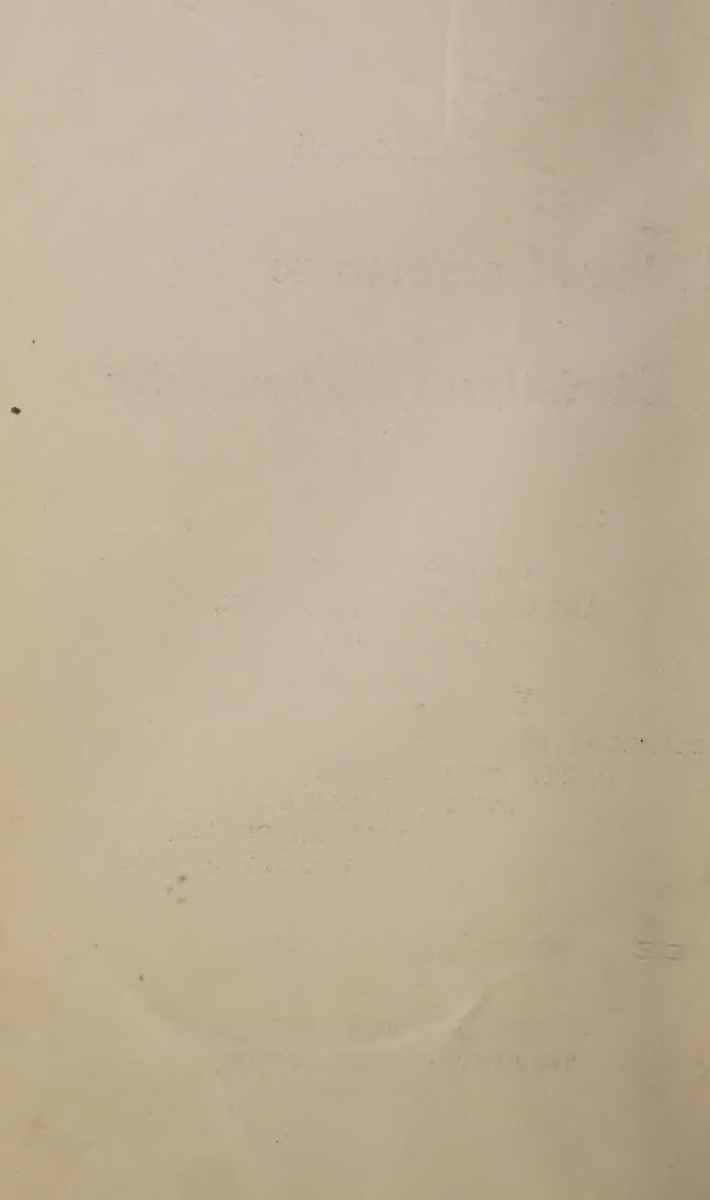
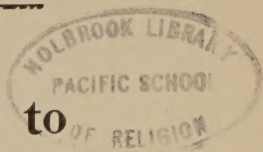


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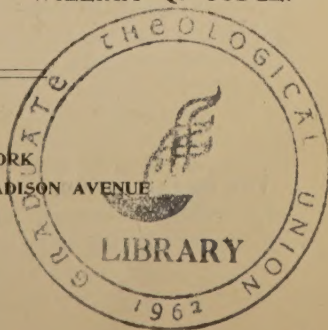
Things Common to Christianity^A_D Theosophy

PAPERS READ BEFORE
ARYAN T.S., NEW YORK,
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BY

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THINGS COMMON TO THEOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANITY.

A DISCUSSION AT THE ARYAN T.S., JANUARY 9TH, 1894, UNDER
THE TITLE "WHAT IS COMMON TO CHRISTIANITY
AND THEOSOPHY".

ALEXANDER FULLERTON'S PAPER.

I have always thought this question, in some or other form, to be one of the most important that could come before the Theosophical Society. Theosophy, as it enters the region of the West, finds it pre-occupied by a strongly entrenched faith. A large body of intelligent, cultivated men have, indeed, relinquished all connection with the conventional religion, but an enormous proportion of the community is either directly identified with it or perceptibly colored in doctrine by it. Centuries of dominance have infused all religious and social life with a certain quality called Christian, so that anything divergent from it, more especially anything markedly in contrast, must appear both strange and heretical. When Theosophy appears, coming apparently from the East and expressing convictions so foreign to those universal around, it is natural that it should be supposed hostile and should incur hostility. And yet it is to the religiously-disposed, those who venerate the spiritual principle and wish to be guided

by it, that Theosophy has a mission. To the indifferent or the skeptical it is meaningless or superfluous.

Setting apart from consideration that division of the community avowedly free from interest in Christianity, we see in the Christian field itself three distinct sections. The first is of individuals who adhere unflinchingly to the old-time doctrines and usages, learned in childhood and believed without question since. Scientific discoveries, facts brought to light by Comparative Theology and Biblical Criticism, fresh interpretations from the late schools of German and Anglican research, pass by without effect. Uninfluenced, unmoved by the spirit of the time, these religionists preserve the theology of a century ago, and any variant thought is considered not only profane but a contravention of the oracles of God. Even to harbor it would be a sin. As Lecky expressed it, they pity, condemn, pray for the conversion of those who uphold doctrines other than those they have been accustomed to, in short, do everything with such doctrines except examine the grounds upon which they rest. Evidently to such a class Theosophy has no message, and attempts to impart one are futile from the outset.

But there is a second class. It is of those who cling to their ancestral creed, have no suspicion of its accuracy or wish to abandon it, do not doubt its authenticity as a statement of spiritual things, but have been more or less consciously modified by the temper of the age and the new teachings with which religious literature teems. Dogma has loosened though it has not lost its hold; very many old-time ideas have perceptibly changed shape; the doctrinal outfit is less rigid and sharp; new interpretations are greeted as more genially in harmony with modern life and tone. Scholarship is conceded some value as a pointer to historic lessons, revelation regarded rather as a living process than a changeless fossil.

More light seems not an impossible thing, and if it comes it will not be unwelcome.

And there is a third class. It is of those whose adherence to the instituted religion and Church is very slight. They have a distant, perhaps sentimental, reverence, have not encountered anything which seems ready to take the place of the vanishing system, and so are unprepared for any decided change of base, but do not pretend to satisfaction with existing creeds nor with the explanations of life and life's enigmas which have hitherto been current. They are in open sympathy with fresh thought and broad exposition, welcome investigation, court inquiry, give hearty greeting to whatever bears the stamp of Truth. If the East can produce theories more consonant with fact and more redolent of probability than has the West, very well; names are nothing, verification is everything. The motto of the Theosophical Society, "There is no religion higher than Truth", appeals very strongly to their convictions.

To these two classes Theosophy has certainly a mission. The very object of lifting up its voice is to proffer better explanation of the problems all serious men confront, to clear away mysteries and doubts and misgivings, to give rational, intelligent, hopeful interpretations of human existence, to furnish motive and stimulus and trust, to substitute knowledge for belief. Yet the very condition to its success is sympathy. Make it a hostile, aggressive system, bent on uprooting every familiar thought and demolishing every cherished trust, eager to find points of antagonism and to emphasize them, and you excite repulsion from the very class you hope to win. Old dormant associations, creeds slowly disintegrating, opinions once felt precious but long covered with later mental deposits, wake and come to life again when the challenge to battle is sounded. Attack invites defense. Waning orthodoxy recovers

its vigor when it is called names and flaunted and defied, for human nature is in religion as elsewhere, and springs up to reprisals when you treat it with contumely.

It is exactly here, I think, that so much harm has been done by not too zealous, but too belligerent, Theosophists. Undoubtedly there is much in the conventional religion which reason and reverence must condemn. Historic Christianity is not edifying reading, nor is existing Christianity savory. When one perceives how doctrines have been formed, and learns something of Œcumenical Councils, and recalls the story of the Middle Ages, and inspects the Churches of to-day, he does not thrill with admiration or bow in homage or start from exultation. Nor do Catechisms and Creeds fill with veneration for their rationality or hope for their continuance. And yet it is not by onslaughts that these erections are to be overthrown. Even less can this be so when the onslaughts are indiscriminating. At times we hear Theosophists who seem rancorous with hatred of Christianity. All its beliefs and usages are treated with a contempt which is almost malignant. Its adherents are disposed of as besotted fools or deliberate hypocrites, its ministers as designing impostors eager for popularity or gain. Its unquestionable services to the world, its beautiful ideals and injunctions, even the very life and sacrifice of its Founder,—all are forgotten. Its sacred books, so exquisite in language, so rich in spiritual fervor, so copious in that test of inspiration—the power to inspire, so tender and sympathetic and eloquent and touching and uplifting, are waived aside as the production of scheming priests and a credulous age. Nothing but bitter scorn responds to a sentence from the Gospels or a text from the Epistles. I believe that such treatment is the outcome of ignorance. Men denounce Christianity because they know nothing of

its nature, despise the New Testament because they have not read it. Those who are familiar with the words of Jesus and Sts. Paul and John are not those who jeer at them. And this fact is quickly seen by the keen-sighted and the well-informed. The attack fails because it is partisan, ignorant, violent, ill-judged, wanting in truth, wisdom, and taste.

There is another, a precisely opposite, method by which Theosophy may approach the dominant religion of our day. It is an inquiry not as to points of difference, but as to points of agreement. It is a serious search for the largest common-ground of meeting, for all that may be justly found as a uniting faith. Instead of captious objection and ill-concealed distrust, it looks out with earnest greeting for everything which may furnish broader basis for sympathy and accord, stretching forth generous hands and hearty commendation to whatever of mutual good appears. This would seem to be the purpose of the subject selected for this evening's discussion. It is a contribution to peace, to good will, to fraternization. It is the hail of fellowship, not the war-cry of combat.

Before one can inquire into what is common to Christianity and Theosophy, he must determine what Christianity and Theosophy respectively are. Can we be wrong in taking as true Christianity the words of its Founder and his immediate pupils, as true Theosophy the common teaching of the best accredited exponents in all ages? Certainly it would be unfair to father upon Christianity the speculations of Greek Doctors and Latin monks, the monstrosities of Calvin and the puerilities of Popes. Certainly it would be no less so to hold as Theosophic the fantastic absurdities and wild nonsense which may be seen in some Western publications and in very many Eastern ones. But if we discard from both systems the imaginative outpour from undisciplined minds and go

to headquarters for more authoritative utterance, the points of unison are inspiriting and delightful.

First, then, I should say that Christianity and Theosophy unite in ascribing the Universe and all life that it contains to one Supreme, Divine Original, an Infinite Intelligence manifesting Himself in creation. There is no question of chance or fortuitous combination of atoms, or even of that climax of absurdity—a purposeful Law originating itself and then ruling everything else. All is traced to a central, ultimate Source, inscrutable, indeed, in its essence, but disclosing something of its character in the physical, mental, and moral worlds we know. The Christian Apostle who declared that God had made the world and all things therein, and the Apostle's Master who avowed that "no man hath seen God at any time", are in accord with the sacred Oriental prayer, the Gayatri, which ascribes creation and manifestation to the One who gives sustenance to the Universe, from whom all proceeds and to whom all must return.

And, secondly, Christianity and Theosophy alike consider man as an emanation from God. Theosophy speaks of the radiance from the Divine in every man, the "vital spark of heavenly flame" which is encased in flesh and perpetually prompts the mortal to immortality. Christianity uses a different metaphor, and from the tender relation of earthly pater-nity points to its analogue in the Divine Fatherhood. Jesus speaks ever of the "Father", and St. Paul, himself glowing with the truth of a universal sonship, gladly quotes the line of the Greek poet Aratus, "For we are also His offspring". And thus both religions, phrasing in diverse forms the same great fact, find Deity in humanity, make men an outcome from God, efface the distinction between heaven and earth. If Theosophy gives fuller light on the process by which man was formed, discloses the intermediate steps through which secondary agencies,

themselves emanations from, servants of, the Supreme, carried out the Divine plan in successive formative stages, body gradually being moulded, mind infused, then all made ready for the celestial spark, it does not impair the descent from God, but only describes its method. For that richer exposition the Christian may be grateful, even as he welcomes in the Epistle to the Hebrews the light which is thrown on the Pentateuch.

In the third place, Christianity and Theosophy agree in their conception of human duty. It is that the spiritual principle should so dominate the lower nature as never to be abased by it, but only to so use all earthly experience that its fruits shall be garnered for eternity, every social and personal obligation being fulfilled to the uttermost. The very highest motives are set by both in perpetual view. Whatsoever things are good and true and pure and elevating, these, says the Apostle, are to be thought upon. "Be ye perfect", enjoined Jesus, "even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." The widest sympathy with humanity in all its sufferings and sadnesses, its disappointments and sorrows, marks the genuine aspirant, whether he call himself Theosophist or Christian. Love is the sign of the uplifting character, the "Divine Compassion" spoken of in the *Voice of the Silence*, the "Charity" which St. Paul asserts to be greater even than Faith and Hope. And as internal purification cleanses the nature, and discipline strengthens it, and thought enriches it, sympathy ennobles it and makes it God-like.

In the fourth place, Christianity and Theosophy are at one in their depiction of human destiny. They would not be if the allegories of the Book of Revelation were rightly understood in literal sense by later minds, for a future world with jewelled walls and golden streets—a sort of Crystal Palace heaven—would certainly not comport with anything predicted

in Theosophy. But there is no need to treat Oriental metaphors as if sentences in a guide-book. The Founder of Christianity looked upon the culmination of man's evolution as into a purely spiritual condition of union with the Infinite. "I go," said he, "to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God, that where I am ye may be also". This means that final deliverance from the burden of the flesh, after all lessons are learned and conquests achieved, is into restoration to the bosom of Deity, individuality preserved and yet separation ended. And so Theosophy holds that the long evolutionary course does not pause at any plateau, however elevated, which falls short of re-union with the Supreme, but goes on till the pilgrim finds abundant entrance into the many mansions. That would be a partial round which did not bring back to the beginning, a poor result which failed of perfection.

When two systems agree as to the origin, progress, and destiny of man, they assuredly have in common the most momentous of human doctrines. But when we leave these broad outlines and study into details, there is still more to cheer the friends of both. The very essence of the Theosophic scheme is in the fact that man can only exhaust life of its lessons by undergoing life in every form, and in the law that he creates the form by his own free-willed behavior,—in other words, the fact of Reincarnation and the Law of Karma. But these were no less distinctly asserted or implied by the Prophet of Nazareth. In parable and hint and reference he showed rebirth, and in most unequivocal language taught the rule of retribution. Look at the matter of spiritual instruction adapted to the recipient. Theosophy holds that the highest truths cannot enter the lowest souls, and that as a man fits himself for their disclosure they will be given him. Hence the exoteric and esoteric schools. But Jesus held the same, avowedly teaching but ele-

ments to the multitude and reserving larger facts for disciples. Look at the matter of self-training. Theosophy insists that character is everything, for it is the man; and character can no more be imparted or imputed or borrowed than can disposition. *Reality* alone can be the "Open Sesame" to every door of progress, there being no such thing in the spiritual life as successful imposture or even the masquerading in moral qualities belonging to some one else. But Jesus voiced the same doctrine: "Not every one that saith unto me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven". Look at the matter of human duty. Theosophy claims that the whole circle must be compassed or that the aspirant must still be imperfect; Jesus, that not one tittle of the law can fail. Look at the matter of enlightenment of soul through performance of duty. Theosophy says that it is thus that doubts are solved and assurance comes; Jesus says that he who does the will, he shall know of the doctrine. Take the matter of Masters and Their powers. Theosophy points to Them as facts and cites even Jesus as an example; Jesus avows that even greater works than his are possible to those who follow him perfectly.

And so one might roam over the territory of religion, finding these common occupants harmonious in many a thought and conviction and adjuration. There is nothing surprising in this, for the system we know by its modern name of Theosophy, and the modern system we know as Christianity, are rooted in the same old truths coeval with humanity. If there is a distinction, it is that Theosophy expounds more copiously the facts and the philosophy of religion. Nor is this surprising. The record of Jesus is small and imperfect. He wrote nothing himself, and those who wrote of him were not always adequate to their work. Much by later writers was an

imaginative substitute for his thought, an invention of theological systems utterly foreign to his genius. When we contrast them with his words and spirit, their antagonism becomes palpable. But Theosophy, marred of course by misconception and foolish notion, has had no little literature from acknowledged Masters, and this has checked the tendency to err or add. In its larger library more fact is naturally to be found. How valuable, then, its function as a supplement to the Christian stock! When sincere men, still adherents to Christianity or but loosely touching it, feel the need of an ampler exposition of the great problems of life and obligation and development, why not accept such as it is proffered by the sister-guide? It is no disparagement to a younger teacher that he has not the equipment of an elder; and surely jealousy was far from the spirit of him who said to his disciples of another whom they opposed because not also a follower, "Forbid him not". If there was anything to be learned, we may be certain that Jesus would advise all true men to learn it; if a good could be accomplished, the effort would have his benediction.

And may it not be that Theosophy can enrich itself from Christianity? Once rid of the notion of rivalry, of hostile bearing and of conversions, each perceptive of their common ground and mutual aim, why should not the venerable Wisdom-Religion make use gladly of the contributions of the later efflorescence of the one plant? It has its Buddha, a revered being from long evolution who renounced kingdom and love and enjoyment that he might dispense truth to needy souls: why not its Jesus who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many? It has its *Vedas* and its *Upanishads* with their philosophic unfoldment of the universe and their union of science with religion: why not its Gospels with their tender portrait of the sympa-

thetic Teacher of Nazareth, and its Epistles with their opulence of spiritual expression and their exquisite appeal to the finest sentiments in man? It has its Initiates and Masters whose influence operates incessantly to uplift the race and whose words, both old and fresh, sound through the centuries and the continents: why not see among them the Initiate whose glowing letters stir the devout soul now as they did 1800 years ago in Rome and Corinth and Colosse? It has its cohort of faithful men who hear the Voice of the Silence and are nerved by it to daily duty and daily progress: why not welcome to the same band those who belong there, however different the banner under which they group?

And so it would seem that in a generous friendship between the two great representatives of religion in our hemisphere lies the possibility of a regenerated age. Denunciation will not arouse cordiality, scorn will not awaken warmth, but a quick perception of merit has in it the power of the very heart. If the Theosophist can see in the Christian a fellow-worker responsive to the same ideals and animated by a like philanthropy, and if the Christian can find in the Theosophist a truth which shall supplement his own and make it potent over the ills of a deeply-needy time, then indeed may the era look with gladness upon a future wherein ignorance and despondency and sorrow shall disperse as clouds before the sun.

HARRIE STEELE BUDD'S PAPER.

There is a general impression in the public mind that Theosophical doctrines are opposed to the teachings of Christianity. Perhaps this notion is a correct one if we take the hazy every-day view of Christian doctrines held by the average church-member. He does not seem to understand his own

religion, and, what is more, very often does not care to do other than attend the services regularly, leaving the rest to his priest or preacher. Theosophy does indeed oppose such conduct on the part of the followers of any religion, and insists that it is the duty of every man to seek the truth about his origin and destiny, to enquire about his own religion, about the relations of man and the universe, and that this truth is not to be found by allowing some one else—be he priest or layman—to do his thinking for him.

The teachings of any religion may be grouped under three heads,—philosophy, ethics, and ritual; the first and last heads being divided into exoteric or open, and esoteric or secret learning. The secret doctrine of a religion comprises such philosophy and observances as may be comprehended and practiced only by the select few; those who by purity of life, depth of intellect, clear intuition, and lofty ideals and aspirations are able to perceive and grasp the sublimest spiritual truths concerning Nature and Man. The exoteric teaching is for the masses, whose circumstances and stage of inner development unfit them for the deeper learning. We find this distinction made by every great teacher, in every religion; as much in Christianity as in Brahminism or Buddhism. It was taught by Moses, by Jesus, by St. Paul, and by most of the early Fathers of the Church, as evidenced by many scriptural passages; and the distinction holds to this day in both the Catholic and Protestant churches. The priests and preachers of both churches are taught doctrines which are not entrusted to the laity. I have been told by priests of the Protestant Episcopal church in America, and by preachers of the Baptist and Presbyterian churches, that in some of their theological seminaries the students are taught—as part and parcel of the faith—certain doctrines concerning

the Feminine Aspect of Deity, and about Reïncarnation of the Soul, which are rarely if ever told to laymen, and never preached from the pulpit. And the great Theosophical teachers have ever withheld many things from the profane—those who stand before the temple, and whom Christ denominated “swine”. So far as the mode of teaching is concerned, then, this distinction constitutes the first correspondence between Theosophy and Christianity.

Published documents, being more or less open to all, will relate chiefly to the exoteric doctrines, though they usually contain much of the secret teachings; but the latter are so veiled by parable and allegory, and so filled with blinds, as to require a key for their interpretation. Another point must be borne in mind in this connection; that the spiritual nature of man is not to be comprehended through his lower senses, and so symbols are resorted to,—symbols being but the attempt to portray the invisible in terms of the visible. Let us, then, turn to the sacred books of Christianity and see if it has anything more in common with Theosophy.

The writings which form the basis of Christian teaching, and are deemed inspired, are found in the Bible. This is a collection of books of various authorship, widely separated among themselves in point of time. Chiefly Hebrew in their origin, Hebraïsm has colored the whole mass, making Christianity practically a Jewish religion. So that the sacred books of the Hebrews will also aid us in such an investigation.

Let us take the Theosophical doctrine of the Constitution of Man; that man is a being composed of seven principles, which may be grouped for convenience into Spirit, soul, and body. Theosophy teaches that Spirit is one, indivisible and immortal, the Spirit in man being a ray from the Supreme,

undivided and unattached ; that his soul is conditionally immortal ; and that the body (comprising the four lower principles) is perishable.

In the Bible we find that St. Paul declares man to be constituted of Spirit, soul, and body. And he makes the same distinction between them as does Theosophy. In his Epistle to the Romans, 8th chapter and 11th verse, he speaks of the Spirit of God that dwelleth in *men*, thus making man's Spirit identical with the Supreme ; and so in other verses of the same chapter. In the 16th verse of the 3d chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians he repeats the assertion, using the same words. In the 17th verse of the 6th chapter of the same book he says that "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit", reminding us forcibly of the many passages in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* which teach union with the Supreme. In the 12th chapter of First Corinthians, 12th to 24th verses, he clearly teaches the Theosophical idea that this unity of Spirit is the real basis of the Universal Brotherhood of Mankind, for he says that through the One Spirit we form one body, and that whether Jews or Greeks, bond or free, we are made to drink of one Spirit. He insists upon the idea of non-separateness, so often set forth in Theosophical writings, saying that the body is not one member, but many ; that if the foot shall say, "Because I am not of the hand, I am not of the body", it is not therefore not of the body ; and that all the members are indispensable, each having need of the others. This is pure Theosophy. In the 3d verse of the 3d chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians he sets forth the truth that the Light of the Spirit is to be sought for in the hearts of men, saying that the Word of God is not to be found graven upon tables of stone, nor written in ink ; but written with the Spirit of the Living God, in tables that are the hearts of flesh. This is really the

“Heart Doctrine”, the Secret Teaching spoken of in our *Book of the Golden Precepts*. In the 4th chapter and 4th verse of his Epistle to the Church at Ephesus he again preaches the unity of all men through the Unity of Spirit. In the 23d verse of the 5th chapter of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians he distinctly enumerates Spirit, soul, and body, and in the 12th verse of the 4th chapter of his Letter to the Hebrews refers to the division between Spirit and soul. Turning to the Old Testament, in Ecclesiastes, xii, 7, we find that man’s Spirit at death shall return to God who gave it, that is, it will go to Heaven or Devachan, showing very clearly the immortality of the Spirit, and that it is in no danger of being lost. In this connection the Hebrew books teach that the Jews always believed in the immortality of the Spirit as distinct from the soul, and that this Spirit in man and the Supreme Spirit of the Universe are One, Undivided, and Unknowable. The daily prayer of the devout Hebrew says, “Hear, O Israel, our God, our Lord, is One”.

Taking up the subject of the conditional immortality of the soul, that is to say, of the lower Manas, Theosophy teaches that this principle has two aspects. It may either aspire towards its Higher Self, and so attain to ultimate union with the Supreme; or tend downward towards the animal nature, becoming of the earth earthy, and end at last in annihilation.

In the Bible we find two words, translated by *soul* in English. They are *nephesh*, a Hebrew word used throughout the Old Testament, and *psuche*, a Greek term used in all the New Testament. In Dr. Robert Young’s *Concordance to the Bible* both words are rendered by “animal soul”, a term which expresses the Theosophical idea of the lower Manas dominated by the kamic or animal nature. This may be shown by the many descriptions of the soul

and its attributes which are to be found in the Bible. Among other things the soul is shown to be affected by the pairs of opposites, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow ; it can be bound or loosed, lost or saved ; it feels emotions, and can be influenced by other souls, and it loves or hates. There are in the Bible about five hundred references to the soul in this sense, and so I shall not take up the time by quoting any of them.

Studying the lower part of the human constitution, included in the term body, and which man has in common with the animals, Theosophy teaches that it is composed of four principles. The principle of desire, or *kama* ; the life principle, or *prana* ; the astral body, or model upon which the physical body is builded ; and the physical body proper. In the Bible we find references to all of these, though in many cases the meaning of the passages is not apparent on the surface.

The karmic principle in man—sometimes called the animal soul—is the animal nature, that which desires, is attracted or repelled, and which responds to emotions and sensations of every sort. The Sanskrit word *kama* means *desire*, and in the Old Testament we find three cases where the word *nephesh* is translated by desire. One of them is the 9th verse of the 6th chapter of Ecclesiastes : “Better is the light of the eyes than the wanderings of the desire”. In two places the same word is translated *lust*. Also the Greek word *psuche* is twice rendered by the English word *sensual*. In fifteen places the word *nephesh* is translated by *mind*, or mind coupled with desire, showing the use of the term in the sense of *kama-manas*. The word *psuche* is three times translated in the same way. Passing to the *prana* or life principle, there are hosts of references to the breath of life, or the vital airs ; both in the

sense of prana, and also prana in connection with kama. Among these is the 37th chapter and 9th verse of Ezekiel, in which the Lord tells the Adept to call: "Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live". The word here translated *breath* is *ruach* in Hebrew, and the same word is used in the 21st verse of the 3d chapter of Ecclesiastes, where the Preacher declares that the spirit (*ruach*) of the sons of men goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth. This passage savors of the distinction between the upward and downward life-currents spoken of in several of the Upanishads.

There are many other passages in the Bible relating to the different principles, which practically teach the Theosophical doctrine. Those given will serve as examples, and it is possible, by some study and research, to identify in the Bible nearly all of the chief doctrines taught by Theosophy; such as Karma, reïncarnation, the septenary constitution of the Universe as well as of Man, the different states after death, cyclic law, the possibility of Adeptship, the Universal Brotherhood of Man, the great doctrine of the Avatar, and many others.

JOSEPH HALL FUSSELL'S PAPER.

Mr. Fussell remarked that Christianity might be considered in two ways,—as the teachings of Jesus, an ideal Christianity, or as Christianity in practice, organized and systematized.

Ideal Christianity is Theosophy, as is shown from the meaning given to "Religion" by Jesus and his immediate disciples. It is altogether a practical matter, as appears from the parable of the last judgment, from the statement that he enters the kingdom of Heaven who does the will of the Father, and from the definition of religion in the Epistle of St. James.

Moreover, there is no distinction of caste or creed in such religion. It is Theosophy pure and simple.

But how are we to look at the practical Christianity of to-day? Are we to take the words of preachers and the reports of missionaries, or are we to look at the results and methods of the system? The Parliament of Religions at Chicago furnished a good object lesson of the relation between Christianity and Theosophy and between Christianity and other religions, and it was interesting to note the views of two of the church papers on the value of the Parliament.

"In this sense the Christian religion is essentially intolerant," says the *Living Church* (P. E.) of Chicago. "She cannot grant that other religions have come from God or that this has come from man. When the time comes that those who stand for the Christian cause assent to the position that the religion which they profess is, in origin and character, one with the great world-religions, only contending that it is a later and more advanced product of human evolution, Christianity will have changed its essential character. It will no longer be the cause which produced martyrs. It will no longer be the religion of the Apostles and Fathers. It was the intolerant aggressiveness of Christianity which brought down upon it the hand of persecution. If it had been willing to live on terms of equality with other systems, courteously conceding to them a legitimate place in the economy of the universe, it would easily have become a legalized system in the Roman world. But it would engage in no such compromise. It would not agree 'to live and let live'. It could never be hindered from asserting that it alone was right and all the rest were wrong."

The New York *Christian Enquirer* says of the Parliament of Religions: "'What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?' So wrote Paul to the Christians of Corinth; so would he write to the Christians of Chicago if he had been invited to attend the 'Parliament of Religions' on the shores of Lake Michigan. For many of the gentlemen in that so-called parliament we have great respect. Some Baptist brethren, whom we highly esteem, read papers and added greatly to the interest of the meetings. We were delighted with the speech of Dr. Abbott of the *Outlook*, and with others of a like stamp. To many of the sentiments uttered we can cheerfully respond, but for the thing itself, a con-

glomeration of odds and ends, opposites and antagonisms, an *omnium gatherum* of clean things and foul, true ideas and false, we have nothing but criticism and contempt. A noble sight, men say it is, for all religions to meet on one common platform! Yes, it would be if all religions came together to fuse their differences and unite to crown Christ king of kings. But they are met, each to blow his own trumpet, 'crack up' his own religion, and go away without the least approach to practical harmony. First a rule is made that there shall be no discussion, no answering back, no reply to false statements or false doctrines, and then Hindu and Mussulman, Papist and pagan, each one declares his religion the true one and the only one. Christianity seems to have been placed upon a pedestal for pagans to poke fun at and traduce."

Observe, Christianity is declared to be "essentially intolerant". What greater contrast could there be between this intolerant Christianity and the religion as lived and taught by Jesus, or between it and Theosophy? From this standpoint there is *nothing* in common between 'Theosophy and Christianity. The Reports of the Parliament show what the Japanese representatives testified as to the effect of missions, and the reports of British officers in India show the greater prevalence of crime among native converts to Christianity than among those who adhere to their native faith.

We cannot judge of any religion merely by citing the lives and works of a few men, whether the noblest or worst of characters. The Roman Catholic Church produced both a Loyola and a St. Francis. The claim of Roman Catholicism to be the only true religion and its denunciation of Free Masonry show its exclusiveness. The enormous accumulation of property in ecclesiastical hands in this country seems to contravene the injunction of Jesus to poverty among preachers. These things are in contrast to the words and efforts of Jesus, which are the same as the words of Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, and all the great teachers of the world.

LEON LANDSBERG'S PAPER.

The Zohar, or Book of Light of the Kabalists, contains a beautiful allegory, which, it seems to me, is most appropriately applied to the subject of to-night's discussion. "Picture to yourself", it says, "a man living alone in the mountain and unaccustomed to the usages of the city. He produced and lived upon wheat which he ate in its natural state. One day he went to the city, where he was given bread of good quality. He asked: 'What is this good for?' He was answered: 'It is bread to eat'. He took it and liked it, after which he asked again: 'What is it made of?' The answer was: 'It is made of wheat'. Some time afterward he was given some cakes mixed with oil. He tasted them and asked: 'And what is this made of?' He was answered: 'It is made of wheat'. By and by some royal pastry mixed with oil and honey was set before him. Again he asked the same question and again received the same answer: 'It is made of wheat'. Then the man exclaimed: 'All these things are at my command. I use them already in their natural state. I use wheat of which they are made'."

The theosophic student who, carrying out the second object of our Society, investigates the Aryan and other Eastern religions, finds himself in exactly the same position as the man in the allegory. Whatever the religious system be which he makes the subject of his study, whether he examines the Vedas, the Zend-Avesta, the Kabbalah, or our own Bible, he will discover to his astonishment that, however at variance their outer garment, they have all underlying the same uniform truth, which, as Theosophy, he enjoyed in its pure and unadulterated state. Christianity does not make an exception to all Eastern religions, which agree as to their theosophic

basis, and therefore it is easy to show that it has many truths in common with Theosophy and hence also with other religions. Take, for instance, the doctrine of the Universal Brotherhood of Mankind, which Theosophy proves as a fact in the physical, psychic, mental, and spiritual planes of existence, and which has found expression in the sublime ethical precept of Jesus: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them". It was also taught by Socrates, Rabbi Hillel, Seneca, Aristotle, Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tsze, Krishna, Manu, and many others before and after Jesus had preached it. The only trouble with Christianity is that in the course of time it has so strongly spiced the uniform truth with indigestible dogmas, such as the fall of man, original sin, atonement, etc., that it assumed so many different shapes in creeds and sects and divisions, that it was so long exposed to the heat of hell-fire, that the wheat of which originally it was made is hardly any more recognizable, so that the term Christianity now-a-days expresses two entirely different concepts, as was well illustrated by our president in our last discussion on this subject: the academic or theoretical Christianity, the Christianity as it should be, and that conventional lie which generally now-a-days parades under this name, the Christianity as it really is. The latter differs from the former as the sun's distorted image reflected in a puddle from the true giver of light and life. If therefore we speak of what Christianity has in common with Theosophy, it should be understood that we mean by the former the pure teachings of Christ, and not that artificial structure erected by priestcraft, the basis of which is ignorance, the pillars fear and superstition, and the crowning roof hypocrisy.

Now it has been shown to you, I believe to your full satisfaction, that true Christianity has many

things in common with Theosophy, nay, that essentially they are almost identical; but it may not be without interest to you to learn that there are also among the Church Fathers to be found many Christians who reëcho the truths taught by Theosophy. Origen was such a Christian Theosophist. Knowing how the Church is wont to deal with men who dare to think and express their opinions, it will not surprise you that his name figures among those heretics who were anathematised at the fifth Œcumenical Council of Constantinople in 553; but I hasten to add that, according to some of the greatest Church historians, like Halloux, Garnier, Hefler, Basnage, Walch, and others, the mention of Origen's name in this connection is an interpolation, a thing not unusual in the Christian church. Now the teachings on which it was held that he had plainly departed from the orthodox faith are the very points which Theosophy fully endorses.

They are :

1. That the souls of men had existed in a previous state, and that their imprisonment in material bodies was a punishment for sins which they had then committed.

2. That the human soul of Christ had also previously existed.

3. That our material bodies shall be transformed into absolutely ethereal ones.

3. That all men, and even devils, shall be finally restored.

St. Jerome also accuses him of having departed from the Catholic faith, specially in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity.

You see the very charges raised against him constitute his merits in the eyes of the Theosophist.

Indeed, Origen's works, especially his book *De Principiis*, are a veritable gold-mine of theosophic

thought. Take, for instance, his views on hell and punishment ; how different from those held by the Church !

In his interpretation of the 2d verse in the 1st chapter of Isaiah, referring to hell-fire, he says :

“By these words it seems indicated that every sinner kindles for himself the flame of his own fire, and is *not* plunged into some fire which has been already kindled by another, or was in existence before himself. Of this fire the fuel and food are our sins . . . and I think that, as abundance of food and provisions of contrary kind and amount breed fevers in the body ; and fevers, too, of different sorts and duration, according to the proportion in which the collected poison supplies material and fuel for disease ; . . . so when the soul hath gathered together a multitude of evil works and an abundance of sins against *itself*, at a suitable time all that assembly of evils boils up to punishment ; . . . when the mind itself, or conscience, receiving into the memory all those things of which it had stamped on itself certain signs and forms at the moment of sinning, will see a kind of history, as it were, of all the foul and shameful and unholy deeds which it has done, exposed before its eyes ; then is the conscience itself harassed, and, pierced by its own goads, becomes an accuser and a witness against itself.” (*De Prin.*, Bk. II, ch. x, §4.)

And he adds further on (§10) : “And that the understanding of this matter may not be very difficult, we may draw some consideration from the evil effects of those passions which are wont to befall some souls, as when a soul is consumed by the fire of love, or wasted away by zeal or envy, or when the passion of anger is kindled, or one is consumed by the greatness of his madness or sorrow ; on which occasions, finding the excess of evils unbearable, have deemed it more tolerable to submit

to death than to endure perpetually torture of such a kind."

Could the power of evil thoughts and the *post mortem* state according to theosophic conceptions be better portrayed than by these words of the Church Father?

Also of Paradise and the Saints his opinions deviate by far from those held by the Church. To him Paradise is not a place, a heavenly Jerusalem, where the rewards are said to consist in the indulgence of sensual desires and lusts, but a spiritual state of consciousness, and the Saints, he says, "are to be understood to be princes and rulers who both govern those of lower rank, and instruct them and teach them and train them to divine things". (*De Prin.*, Bk. II, ch. x.)

That Origen understands by his Saints the Masters and Mahâtmas of Theosophy, we learn from the following passage :

"But the third order of rational creatures is that of those souls of men who have been made the sons of God, or the children of resurrection ; those who have proved victorious in every struggle, . . . who mortifying their members on the earth, and rising above not only their corporeal nature but even the uncertain and fragile movements of the soul itself, have united themselves to the Lord, being made altogether spiritual." ("On the Angels", *De Prin.*, Bk. I, ch. viii, §4.)

Origen is frequently and justly quoted as a supporter of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which, according to St. Jerome, was taught among the first Christians as an esoteric traditional doctrine to be communicated only to a small number of elect disciples. Origen regards it as the only means to explain certain biblical accounts, which without it would accuse God of injustice. He also protests most emphatically against the supposition that hu-

man souls could descend to such a pitch of abasement as to sink into the condition of irrational animals. ("On the Angels", *De Prin.*, Bk. I, ch. viii, §4 ; see also *Adv. Celsum*, Bk. III.)

Transmigration, according to Origen, and in harmony with teachings of Theosophy, is not limited to man but extends also over the sun, moon, planets, and stars, which are rational beings endowed with life, soul, and mind. "Before their removal from invisible to visible worlds and assuming gross bodies", says Origen, "they enjoyed a former blessedness". In fact, we find reëchoed almost everything contained in the *Secret Doctrine* concerning the Manasa Putras, "those who endow the senseless shells", and the Manasa Dhyanis, "the givers of intelligence and consciousness", when we read what he says of those rational creatures . . . "of whom some were to be subject to the necessities of the world ; others were to discharge with care and attention the duties enjoined upon them at all times . . . some powers falling down from a loftier position, others gradually sinking down to earth : some falling voluntarily, others being cast down against their will : some undertaking of their own accord the service of stretching out the hand to those who fall ; others being compelled to preserve for so long a time in the duty which they have undertaken."

The second fundamental proposition of the *Secret Doctrine*, namely, the eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane, periodically the play-ground of numberless universes "incessantly manifesting and disappearing", is not unknown to Origen. Against the objection raised that the world had a beginning, he says : "We can give a logical answer in accordance with the standard of religion, when we say that not then for the first time did God begin to work, when he made this visible

world, but as, after its destruction, there will be another world, so also we believe that others existed before the present came into being." (*De Prin.*, Bk. III, ch. 5.) And he quotes passages of Scripture. (Is. lxvi, 22, and Eccl. i, 9.)

I refrain from quoting Origen's utterances on the law of Karma, which a man of his spiritual insight could not fail to realize, and although he does not employ the Sanskrit term used in Theosophy, he teaches substantially the nature of this law when, for instance, he says that "down to the humblest, all things are arranged according to a most *impartial retribution*, and each in conformity with his deserts". (*De Prin.*, ch. ix, § 8.)

We have now spent two evenings in trying to show what Christianity has in common with Theosophy. I hope we have succeeded in this easy task. But, to be frank, I must say that while the discussion of this subject may be useful in demonstrating to Christians that Theosophy is not antagonistic to the true spirit of their faith, it is of no value whatever for the Theosophist, who must have already acquired the confirmation of this fact. To my mind it is but a loss of time to search the scriptures of the various religions for a grain of truth which must be taken with all the error attached to it, when our own Secret Doctrine offers an ocean of pure and unadulterated truth which demands all our time to study and meditate upon. But we can draw a good lesson from to-night's discussion, a lesson already pointed out in the introductory allegory to this paper: just as the man who does not wish to spoil his stomach is careful to eat pure and wholesome food, so we who wish to preserve the health of the soul ought to choose only the pure truths of Theosophy rather than the stimulatives offered by the creeds. For while the former act directly upon the soul, increasing its health and growth, the latter, though per-

haps more pleasing to the cravings of our emotions, have ever proved a poison to man's spiritual nature.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE'S ADDRESS.

That the Theosophical Society is not opposed to Christianity in either its dogmatic or pure form is easily demonstrated. Our constitution forbids it and the second object of the Society does also. The laws of our body say that there shall be no crusade against any religion, tacitly excepting, of course, the few degraded and bestial religions now in the world; the second object provides for a full and free study of all religions without bias and without hatred or sectarianism. And our history also, offering to view branch societies all over the world composed of Christians, refutes the charge that the Society as such is opposed to Christianity. One instance is enough, that of the well-known Scottish Lodge, which states in its printed Transactions No. IX, "Theosophists who are Christians (and such are the majority of the Scottish Lodge). . . Therefore Christians who are sincere and who know what Theosophy means must be Theosophists . . ." If members of the Society have said to the contrary it has been from ignorance and a careless thinking, for on the same ground we should also be opposed to all other religions which have any forms, and both Brahmanism and Buddhism have as much of formalism as has Christianity. Generally speaking, then, the Society is not and cannot be opposed to Christianity, while it may lead to a denial of some of the men-made theories of that Church.

But that is no more than branches of Christianity have always been doing, nor is it as much a danger to formal Christianity as the new standards of criticism which have crept into the Church.

Nor can it be either that Theosophy as a whole is opposed to Christianity, inasmuch as Theosophy is and must be the one truth underlying all religions that have ever been among men. A calm and sincere examination of all the world's religions reveals the fact that in respect to ethics, in respect to laws, in respect to precepts or example or effect on daily life, or even in respect to cosmogony and cosmology, the other religious books of the world are the same in most respects as those of the Christians, and that the distinguishing difference between the latter's religion and the others is that it asserts an exclusiveness for itself and a species of doctrinal intolerance not found in the rest.

If we take the words and the example of Jesus as the founder of Christianity, it is at once seen that there is no opposition at all between that form of religion and Theosophy. Indeed, there is the completest agreement. New ethics are not brought forward by Theosophy, nor can they be, as ethics of the right sort must always be the same. In his sermons and sayings are to be found the ethics given out by Buddha and by all other great teachers of all time. These cannot be altered, even though they hold up to weak mortals an ideal that is very difficult to live up to and sometimes impossible to realize in daily life. That these rules of conduct laid down by Jesus are admittedly hard to follow is shown in the behavior of Christian states toward each other and in the declarations of their high prelates that the religion of Jesus cannot be the basis for diplomatic relations nor for the state government. Hence we find that the refuge from all this adopted by the theologian is in the statement that, although other and older religions had moral truth and similar ethics to those of Jesus, the Christian religion is the only one wherein the founder asserted that he was not merely a teacher from God but was also at the same time

God himself; that is, that prior to Jesus a great deal of good was taught, but God did not see fit until the time of Jesus to come down among men into incarnation. Necessarily such a declaration would seem to have the effect of breeding intolerance from the high and exclusive nature of the the claim made. But an examination of Brahmanism shows that Rama was also God incarnate among men, though there the doctrine did not arouse the same sum of intolerance among its believers. So it must be true that it is not always a necessary consequence of such a belief that aggressive and exclusive intolerance will grow up.

The beliefs and teachings of Christianity are not all supportable by the words of Jesus, but his doctrines are at all times in accord with Theosophy. There is certainly a wide difference between the command of Jesus to be poor and to have neither staff nor money and the fact of the possession by the Church of vast sums of money and immense masses of property, and with the drawing of high salaries by prelates, and with the sitting of prelates among the rulers of the earth upon thrones, and in the going to war and the levying of taxes by the Pope and by other religious heads. The gathering of tithes and enforcement of them by law and by imprisonment at the instance of the Protestant clergy are not at all consistent with the words of Jesus. But all of the foregoing inconsistent matters are a part of present Christianity, and if in those respects a difference from or opposition to them should seem to arise from Theosophical teachings we must admit it, but cannot be blamed. If we go back to the times of the early Christians and compare that Christianity with the present form, we see that opposition by Theosophy could hardly be charged, but that the real opposition then would be between that early form of the religion and its present complexion. It has been altered

so much that the two are scarcely recognizable as the same. This is so much so that there exists a Christian sect to-day called "Early Christian".

Every one has at all times a right to object to theological interpretations if they are wrong, or if they distort the original teaching or introduce new notions. In this respect there is a criticism by Theosophy and Theosophists. But thinkers in the world not members of this Society and not leaning to Theosophy do the same thing. Huxley and Tyndall and Darwin and hosts of others took ground that by mere force of truth and fact went against theological views. Galileo also, seeing that the earth was round and moved, said so, but the theologian, thinking that such belief tended to destroy the power of the church and to upset biblical theories, made him recant at the risk of his liberty and life. If the old views of theology were still in force with the state behind them, the triumphs of science would have been few and we might still be imagining the earth to be flat and square and the sun revolving about it.

Theosophical investigation discloses to the student's view the fact that in all ages there have appeared great teachers of religion and that they all had two methods of instruction. One, or that for the masses of people, was plain and easy to understand; it was of ethics, of this life and of the next, of immortality and love; it always gave out the Golden Rule. Such a teacher was Buddha, and there can be no controversy on the fact that he died centuries before the birth of Jesus. He declared his religion to be that of love. Others did the same. Jesus came and taught ethics and love, with the prominent exception of his prophecy that he came to bring a sword and division as recorded in the Gospels. There is also an incident which accents a great difference between him and Buddha; it is the feast where he drank wine and also made some for others to drink.

In regard to this matter, Buddha always taught that all intoxicating liquors were to be rigidly abstained from. The second method was the secret or Esoteric one, and that Jesus also used. We find his disciples asking him why he always used easy parables with the people, and he replied that to the disciples he taught the mysteries, or the more recondite matters of religion. This is the same as prevailed with the older saints. Buddha also had his private teachings to certain disciples. He even made a distinction among his personal followers, making classes in their ranks, to one of which he gave the simple rules, to the other the complex and difficult. So he must have pursued the ancient practise of having two sets of teachings, and this must have been a consequence of his education.

At twelve years of age he came to the temple and disputed with the learned rabbis on matters of the law. Thus he must have known the law; and what that law was and is it is necessary to ask. It was the law of Moses, full of the most technical and abstruse things, and not all to be found in the simple words of the books. The Hebrew books are a vast mine of cypher designedly so constructed, and that should be borne in mind by all students. It ought to be known to Christians, but is not, as they prefer not to go into the mysteries of the Jews. But Jesus knew it. His remark that "not one jot or tittle of the law would pass" shows this. Most people read this simply as rhetoric, but it is not so. The jots and tittles are a part of the books and go to make up the cypher of the Cabala or the hidden meaning of the law. This is a vast system of itself, and was not invented after the time of Jesus. Each letter is also a number, and thus every word can be and is, according to a well-known rule, turned into some other word or into a number. Thus one name will be a part of a supposed historical story, but when read by

the cypher it becomes a number of some cycle or event or a sign of the Zodiac or something else quite different from the mere letters. Thus the name of Adam is composed of three consonants, A, D, and M. These mean by the system of the cypher respectively "Adam, David, and Messiah". The Jews also held that Adam for his first sin would have to and did reincarnate as David and would later come as Messiah. Turning to Revelations we find traces of the same system in the remarks about the numbers of the beast and the man. The Cabala or hidden law is of the highest importance, and as the Christian religion is a Hebraic one it cannot be properly studied or understood without the aid given by the secret teaching. And the Cabala is not dead or unknown, but has many treatises written on it in different languages. By using it, we will find in the Old Testament and in the records of Jesus a complete and singular agreement with Theosophy.

Examine, for instance, the Theosophical teachings that there is a secret or esoteric doctrine, and the doctrine of inability of man to comprehend God. This is the Brahmanical doctrine of the unapproachableness of Parabrahm. In Exodus there is a story which to the profane is absurd, of God telling Moses that he could not see Him. It is in Exodus xxxiii, 20, where God says Moses could see him from behind only. Treat this by the rule of the Cabala and it is plain, but read it on the surface and you have nonsense. In Exodus iii, 14, God says that his name is "I am that I am". This is AHYH ASHR AHYH, which has to be turned into its numerical value, as each letter is also a number. Thus A is 1, H is 5, Y is 10, H is 5. There being two words the same, they add up 42. The second word is A, 1; SH, 300; R, 200; making 501, which added to 42 gives 543 as the number of "I am that I am". Now Moses by the same system makes 345 or the reverse of the

other, by which the Cabala shows God meant Moses to know God by his reverse or Moses himself. To some this may appear fanciful, but as it is the method on which these old books are constructed it must be known in order to understand what is not clear and to remove from the Christian books the well-sustained charge of absurdity and sometimes injustice and cruelty shown on their face. So instead of God's being made ridiculous by attributing to him such a remark as that Moses could only "see his hinder parts", we perceive that under the words is a deep philosophical tenet corresponding to those of Theosophy, that Parabrahm is not to be known and that Man is a small copy of God through which in some sense or in the reverse we may see God.

For the purposes of this discussion along the line of comparison we will have to place Christianity on one side and put on the other as representing the whole body of Theosophy, so far as revealed, the other various religions of the world, and see what, if anything, is common between them. First we see that Christianity, being the younger, has borrowed its doctrines from other religions. It is now too enlightened an age to say, as the Church did when Abbé Huc brought back his account of Buddhism from Tibet, that either the devil or wicked men invented the old religions so as to confuse and confute the Christian. Evidently, no matter how done, the system of the Christian is mixed Aryan and Jewish. This could not be otherwise, since Jesus was a Jew, and his best disciples and the others who came after like Paul were of the same race and faith. The early Fathers also, living as they did in Eastern lands, got their ideas from what they found about them.

Next a very slight examination will disclose the fact that the ritual of the Christian Church is also borrowed. Taken from all nations and religions, not one part of it is either of this age or of the West-

ern hemisphere. The Brahmans have an extensive and elaborate ritual, and so have the Buddhists. The rosary, long supposed by Catholics to be a thing of their own, has existed in Japan for uncounted years, and much before the West had any civilization the Brahman had his form of rosary. The Roman Catholic Christian sees the priest ring the bell at a certain part of the Mass, and the old Brahman knows that when he is praying to God he must also ring a bell to be found in every house as well as in the temple. This is very like what Jesus commanded. He said that prayer must be in secret, that is, where no one can hear; the Brahman rings the small bell so that even if ears be near they shall not hear any words but only the sound of the bell. The Christian has images of virgin and child; the same thing is to be found in Egyptian papyri and in carved statues in India made before the Christian came into existence. Indeed, all the ritual and observance of the Christian churches may be found in the mass of other religions with which for the moment we are making a rough comparison.

Turning now to doctrine, we find again complete agreement with the dogmatic part of Christianity in these older religions. Salvation by faith is taught by some priests. That is an old Brahmanical theory, but with the difference that the Brahman one calls for faith in God as the means, the end, and the object of faith. The Christian adds faith in the son of God. A form of Japanese Buddhism said to be due to Amitabha says that one may be saved by complete faith in Amita Buddha, and that even if one prays but three times to Amita he will be saved in accordance with a vow made by that teacher. Immortality of soul has ever been taught by the Brahmans. Their whole system of religion and of cosmogony is founded on the idea of soul and of the spiritual nature of the universe. Jesus and St. Paul

taught the unity of spiritual beings—or men—when they said that heaven and the spirit of God were in us, and the doctrine of Unity is one of the oldest and most important of the Brahmanical scheme. The possibility of arriving at perfection by means of religion and science combined so that a man becomes godlike—or the doctrine of Adepts and Mahatmas as found in Theosophy—is common to Buddhism and Brahmanism, and is not contrary to the teachings of Jesus. He said to his disciples that they could if they would do even greater works—or “miracles”—than he did. To do these works one has to have great knowledge and power. The doctrine assumes the perfectability of humanity and destroys the theory of original sin; but far from being out of concordance with the religion of Jesus, it is in perfect accord. He directed his followers to be perfect even as the Father in heaven is. They could not come up to that command by any possibility unless man has the power to reach to that high state. The command is the same as is found in the ancient Aryan system. Hence, then, whether we look broadly over the field at mere ritual dogma or at ethics, we find the most complete accord between Theosophy and true Christianity.

But now taking up some important doctrines put forward by members of the Theosophical Society under their right of free investigation and free speech, what do we discover? Novelty, it is true, to the mind of the western man half-taught about his own religion, but nothing that is uncommon to Christianity. Those doctrines may be, for the present, such as Reincarnation or rebirth over and over again for the purpose of discipline and gain, for reward, for punishment, and for enlargement of character; next Karma, or exact justice or compensation for all thoughts and acts. These two are a part of Christianity, and may be found in the Bible.

Reincarnation has been regarded by some Christian ministers as essential to the Christian religion. Dr. Edward Beecher said he saw its necessity, and the Rev. Wm. Alger has recorded his view to the same effect. If a Christian insists upon belief in Jesus, who came only eighteen centuries ago after milleniums had passed and men had died out of the faith by millions, it will be unjust for them to be condemned for a failure to believe a doctrine they never heard of; hence the Christian may well say that under the law of reincarnation, which was upheld by Jesus, all those who never heard of Jesus will be reborn after his coming in A.D. 1, so as to accept the plan of salvation.

In the Gospels we find Jesus referring to this doctrine as if a well established one. When it was broached by the disciples as the possible reason for the punishment by blindness from birth of a man of the time, Jesus did not controvert the doctrine, as he would have done did he see in his wisdom as Son of God that it was pernicious. But at another time he asserted that John the Baptist was the reincarnation of Elias the ancient prophet. This cannot be wiped out of the books, and is a doctrine as firmly fixed in Christianity, though just now out of favor, as is any other. The paper by Prof. Landsberg shows you what Origen, one of the greatest of the Christian Fathers, taught on preëxistence of souls. This theory naturally suggests reincarnation on this earth, for it is more natural to suppose the soul's wanderings to be here until all that life can give has been gained, rather than that the soul should wander among other planets or simply fall to this abruptly, to be as suddenly raised up to heaven or thrown down to hell.

The next great doctrine is Karma. This is the religion of salvation by works as opposed to faith devoid of works. It is one of the prime doctrines of

Jesus. By "by their works ye shall know them", he must have meant that faith without works is dead. The meaning of *Karma* literally is "works", and the Hindus apply it not only to the operations of nature and of the great laws of nature in connection with man's reward and punishment, but also to all the different works that man can perform. St. James insists on the religion of works. He says that true religion is to visit the fatherless and the widows and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. St. Matthew says we shall be judged for every act, word, and thought. This alone is possible under the doctrine of Karma. The command of Jesus to refrain from judgment or we should ourselves be judged is a plain statement of Karma, as is, too, the rest of the verse saying that what we mete out shall be given back to us. St. Paul, following this, distinctly states the doctrine thus: "Brethren, be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap". The word "whatsoever" includes every act and thought, and permits no escape from the consequences of any act. A clearer statement of the law of Karma as applied to daily life could hardly be made. Again, going to Revelations, the last words in the Christian book, we read all through it that the last judgment proceeds on the works—in other words, on the Karma—of men. It distinctly asserts that in the vision, as well as in the messages to the Churches, judgment passes for works.

We therefore must conclude that the religion of Jesus is in complete accord with the chief doctrines of Theosophy; it is fair to assume that even the most recondite of theosophical theories would not have been opposed by him. Our discussion must have led us to the conclusion that the religion of Karma, the practise of good works, is that in which the religion of Jesus agrees with Theosophy, and that alone thereby will arrive the longed-for day

when the great ideal of Universal Brotherhood will be realized, and will furnish the common ground on which all faiths may stand and from which every nation may work for the good and the perfection of the human family.

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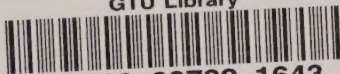
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